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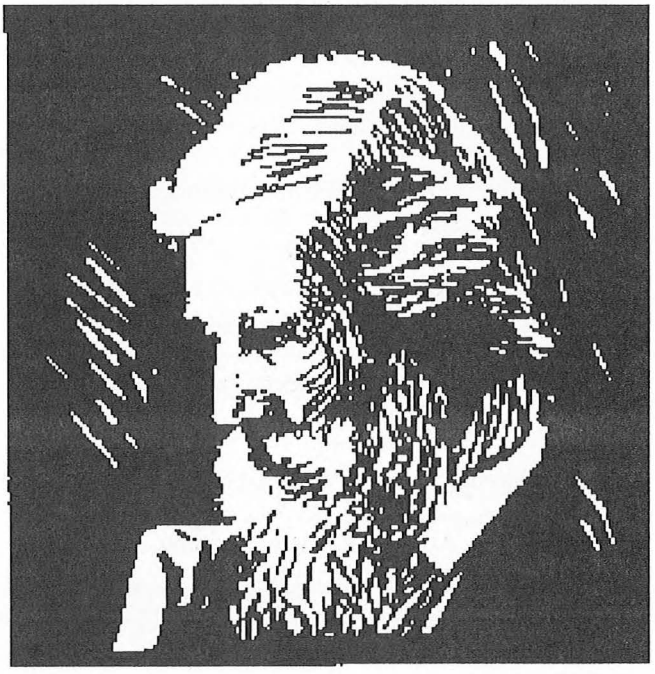
JOHN MUIR AND THE VAN DYKE RANCH: INTIMACY AND DESIRE IN HIS FINAL YEARS



By Peter Wild

(Editor's note: Well-known author, poet, biographer and nature writer, Peter Wild is Professor of Modern Language at the University of Arizona in Tucson. The following paper is an outgrowth of his recent research on the Muir family in the Southwest. Part Two will be published in the next issue.)

PART ONE

When occasional gunfire erupted in the town, it could be heard at the nearby desert ranch, but that didn't seem to bother Helen Muir. "This is a beautiful day full of sunshine, and I am feeling sunshiny, too," Helen reassured her father, John Muir (January 8, 1908).[1] "I was very glad to get your all-well letter today," Muir responded from Martinez, at his orchard home in the San Francisco Bay area (January 9, 1908). Not many days before, Helen's bout with pneumonia took a sharp turn for the worse, and Muir had made a desperate rush south with Helen in hopes that the warm, dry air of the Mojave desert would put his pallid daughter back on the path of recovery.

Now the crisis, in an age when people regularly died of respiratory problems, seemed to be passing. Helen's health would always be of concern, but in the main she grew ever more robust as the days passed into months. She came to love her new desert surroundings and eventually married a local rancher's son. Such an upbeat exchange between father and daughter as marked the early correspondence of their separation beginning early in 1908 would be repeated over the six years until Muir's death in 1914. During that time, Muir would take the train south to visit Helen, bounce his grandsons on his knee, regale the cowboys at the desert ranch with tales spun in his charming Scottish brogue and hand out boxes of pineapples, peaches, and cigars.[2]

Yet such happy letters often let slip hints of other, less pleasant matters churning under the surface of the hopeful Victorian prose flying between father and daughter. The truth is that Muir's closing years were the most tumultuous of his mature life, and to probe such issues through letters and other documents gives a good measure of Muir both as a public figure and a private man. They show him to be a person, indeed, as his popular image suggested, rising with heroic strenuousness to wrestle with the national environmental problems of the day, writing doggedly in his final years to produce books that still stir nature lovers after almost a century, yet, less known, getting mired in the mundane afflictions that assail us all.

Essentially, the problem was that Muir was getting old, and the cantankerous world was changing. Rude reality refused to conform to his bright vision of what it should be. Yet despite the pain and frustration this caused him, the dramatic loss of the biggest conservation battle of his life, the depths of his private loneliness for all his public acclaim, he would die a happy man, the comfort of any expiring writer, the manuscript of his next book nearly completed and laying beside him.

Before that happened, unhappiness crept into Muir's life. In 1905, he was living happily enough, surrounded by his wife, Louie, and his two daughters, Helen

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1996 MUIR CONFERENCE PLANNING CONTINUES

Be sure to mark your calendars for the special conference, "John Muir in Historical Perspective," to be held April 18-21, 1996. The planning committee is working on a three-day event, each day in a separate location to take advantage of the variety of Muir-related sites in Central California. Below is the tentative schedule:

Thursday evening, April 18: Reception at John Muir National Historic Site, Martinez

Friday morning, April 19: Academic sessions, John Muir National Historic Site

Friday afternoon: Tours of Strentzel-Muir home, Muir Cemetary

Saturday morning, April 20: Academic sessions, University of the Pacific, Stockton

Saturday afternoon: travel to Yosemite National Park

Sunday morning, April 21: Academic sessions, Yosemite Institute, Crane Flat

Sunday afternoon: tour of Muir sites in Yosemite Valley

Participants and guests will be invited to stay overnight at Martinez on Thursday. After Friday morning sessions and tours, they will travel to Stockton and stay overnight there. On Saturday afternoon, after morning sessions and a visit to the Holt-Atherton Library, home of the Muir Family Collection, the conference will recess so that participants may travel to Yosemite and spend the night at the Yosemite Institute in Crane Flat. On Sunday, following a morning academic session, they will have opportunity to visit several Muir sites in the Valley, and still have free time to enjoy the Park.

The deadline for proposals is November 15. Tentative plans and locations may change, depending on the program committee's recommendations and the success in developing the local arrangements. Outside funding will be essential. Any contributions, suggestions or comments will be most welcome and may be forwarded to: CHI96, John Muir Center for Regional Studies, University of the Pacific, Stockton, CA 95211.

The conference invites proposals on any aspect of the theme. Proposals for papers and sessions should be forwarded, along with a brief résumé, to the CHI 96 Program Committee, in care of its Co-Chairs, Professors Sally Miller and Ron Limbaugh, Department of History, University of the Pacific, Stockton, CA 95211 **by November 15, 1995**. Phone (209) 946-2145; fax (209) 946-2318.

ELECTRONIC LETTERS

Date: Wed, 31 May 1995 10:21:00 +0900
Subject: Muir and Buddhism
To: johnmuir@vms1.cc.uop.edu

In the Spring 1995 issue of the John Muir Newsletter, Michelle L. Dwyer argues persuasively that Muir's experience of and writings about Nature show strong affinities to Zen Buddhism. As I argued in my contribution to *John Muir, Life and Work,* I don't think there can be any doubt about this point. Muir's essential perception of reality is in conformance with the basic perceptions of Zen. This perception of Oneness, of undifferentiated existence, is basic not just to the three sects of Zen, but to Buddhism as a whole. Indeed, such identification with nature is at the heart of many spiritual traditions. Thoreau, even as early as his stay at Walden Pond, was experiencing such perceptions and identifying them, correctly, as common both to the Vishnu Purana and the sufi philosophy of Kabir. William James detailed many such ideas in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.

Certainly, as Ms. Dwyer says, Muir had no systematic knowledge of Zen, since the first glilmpse of Zen teachings didn't reach America until the World Parliament of Religions at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition in 1892. Most of Muir's published work seems to be based closely on diaries written long before Zen could possibly have influenced him. But he was exposed much earlier to Vedic and Sufi influences through his Transcendentalist contacts. But there is no need to posit a direct teaching influence. These ideas are freely available within the mind and appear periodically in most or all religious traditions.

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BOOK REVIEWS

***Mori no seija: Shizenhogo no chichi John Muir* [A Saint in the Forest: The Father of Nature Protection John Muir]. By Katô Noriyoshi. Yama-to-keikokusha. (Tokyo: 1995) 279 pp. ¥1600.**

Reviewed by Kozy Amemiya, Sociologist

Katô Noriyoshi, the author of this book, abandoned a publishing career in order to live in the mountains, and he now writes on the subject of nature while running a lodge. He visited the Giant Forest in the Sequoia National Park in the winter of 1992 when he was inspired to learn more about John Muir, who has been little known in Japan. The result is this book, written as an introduction for the Japanese audience to Muir, the father of wilderness protection.

It is not easy to write a book on Muir in such a way that would make sense to a Japanese audience unfamiliar with American history and geography. Mr. Katô takes up this task by narrating Muir's life in chronological order against the historical backdrop supported by geographical descriptions, and succeeds at least in painting an overall picture of Muir's accomplishments.

Katô reconstructs Muir's life around several external factors. First is Muir's childhood in Scotland, especially his strolls in the field with his grandfather, to which Katô attributes Muir's love of nature. Secondly, attendance at the University of Wisconsin provided Muir with basic scientific training and life-long mentors. The third and most significant factor is his accidental arrival in Yosemite whose magnificent beauty enraptured Muir. His glacier theory as to the creation of the Yosemite Valley is the fourth factor and the highlight of Muir's career as a Yosemite specialist. Muir's married life and his political campaigns for congressional protection of Yosemite and other wilderness areas are the last factors considered. Muir is depicted as a fiercely independent individual who wholeheartedly devoted himself to the wilderness and to his family. Muir is also contrasted with nature philosophers of the East Coast elite and with scientists in academic institutions. Notwithstanding all this, the picture of Muir, the man, remains superficial and does not fully come to life.

The problem is that Katô's description of Muir often falls into a trite portrait of an eccentric. As a result, Muir's personal and professional lives are not integrated into the larger cultural context. Nor does Katô discuss Muir's ideas about nature in depth and in what way they are related to the various ideologies of the environmental protection movement. For a Japanese reader to understand Muir, it is important that an author provide a basic grasp of American ideas about nature and wilderness as well as an exploration of how they might differ from Japanese ideas. For example, did Muir regard nature as basically at odds with human beings and in need of human protection? Were Muir's ideas about nature and wilderness in line with or different from that of American mainstream thinkers? Does nature mean the same as *shizen*, a favorite concept of the Japanese? How does wilderness, to which the Japanese language has no exact equivalent, differ from nature? Without thinking about these questions, it will be difficult for a Japanese to understand the social and cultural meaning of national parks in the American context and to appreciate Muir's work.

This book explores John Muir's achievements. Without discussions of Muir's ideas on the relationship between nature and human beings, however, it does not sufficiently explain what propelled Muir in his pursuits. As the Japanese take more interest in the environmental protection movement in the United States, they will demand a book to help them understand Muir in greater depth. Until then, this book will serve as a fair introduction to Muir.

***Postsuburban California: The Transformation of Orange County Since World War II.* Edited by Rob Kling, Spencer Olin and Mark Poster. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) (paperback).**

Reviewed by Roy Childs, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of the Pacific

*(Editor's Note: The **John Muir Newsletter**, with its focus on Muir and the environment sometimes finds that important work on urban and suburban developments merit attention. An example is the book considered below.)*

As this title suggests, the authors in this collection see the emergence of an urbanized Orange County late in the twentieth century as a phenomenon distinctly different in its spatial, economic and social patterns from urban centers which developed earlier. The resulting "multinucleated metropolitan region" may superficially resemble the stereotypical twentieth century suburb, but the reality is quite different. Hence, they apply the term 'postsuburban' to urbanized Orange County.

The chapters in the book discuss the rise of Orange County's postsuburban form as an element of post-industrial society, explain the economic forces responsible for this form, examine the resulting socioeconomic, occupational, and lifestyle consequences, and discuss the political dynamics, more or less in that order. The volume has value as a case study of Orange County and the kind of urban area it seems to epitomize, but has at least equal value as a discussion of contemporary urban theory. For, to make the argument that Orange County represents a new phenomenon, Kling, Olin, Poster and other contributing authors must critique existing theory as it applies to the Orange County case, and attempt new paradigms to frame the data they present. These discussions may prove as useful to the serious reader as the case study itself.

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and Wanda, while managing the extensive orchards in Martinez. In June, however, Helen became seriously ill, and Muir's life took a turn for the worse. Together with her elder sister, Wanda, Muir took Helen to Arizona to benefit from the bright sunshine and high desert air. Barely settled there, the three received word that Louie also was seriously ill. John Muir and Wanda rushed back to Martinez, only to stand by helplessly as Louie died in August. Now the family not only was weakened but split, with Helen remaining in Arizona because of her illness, while John and Wanda took turns traveling back and forth to stay with her. To complicate matters, Wanda married in 1906. The reality of Muir's vision of a stable Victorian home was disintegrating.[3] For the rest of his life he would battle to shore up what had, to a large degree, already fallen apart. In his last extant letter to Helen, Muir was still lamenting: "If I could only have you and Wanda as in the lang syne . . ." (December 3, 1914).

Adding to his woes, the growing city of San Francisco stepped up plans to enlarge its water supply. This would mean invading Yosemite National Park to create a reservoir in Hetch-Hetchy Valley, one of the loveliest of the Sierra's jewels. Bad enough in itself, this could be an alarming precedent, a license to violate other national parks for the real or imagined needs of an expanding economy. In response, Muir rallied the incipient conservation movement, rousing the nation to protest the invasion. Yet, despite years of exhausting activism and several near successes, Muir discovered that it was not enough to be on the side of the angels. Bankrolled by the proponents of growth, the politicians won out. Another battle lost.[4]

In short, during the closing years of his life, Muir was a torn man. As a youth exploring the Sierra in the 1870s, he may have been possessed by a genuine inner calm, but now in his seventies, he sat on his estate in sometimes foggy and chill Martinez, grieving for his lost wife and deceased friends, and depressed with loneliness.[5] Usually not a man to complain, on February 13, 1913, Muir wrote openly to James Whitehead. Briefly catching up his boyhood friend on the events of the decades, Muir concluded that his wife had died ". . . long years ago . . ." and that his two daughters were married. That left him ". . . alone in a large house with only books and hard literary work for companions." Feeling at loose ends as he shuffled around the big, empty house, he fretted over Helen's health, while the hounds of the Hetch-Hetchy conflict constantly bayed, reminding him that what he had accomplished for wilderness preservation might be undone in one swoop.

In the midst of this, plagued now by his own coughing assaults, he struggled to rouse himself, to find the energy and mental clarity to write what he knew would be his final books. At one point his friends saw illness and depression looming so large about him that a worried J. E. Calkins discussed Muir's condition at length with fellow Sierra Club member A. H. Sellers. Calkins feared that ". . . we shall never have much more writing . . ." from Muir before he ". . . crosses the Great Range" (March 23, 1908).

One thing brought Muir through, and if to our far more skeptical age it smacks of cliche, it brought him through nonetheless. Time and again, when the Hetch-Hetchy affair looked bleak or when Helen again had a brush with death, Muir's nineteenth-century optimism rescued him. It blended two impulses. Along with other Christians of the day weary of a constantly chiding and scowling God, Muir defanged his earlier Christianity of its hellfire and spun his beliefs into a rosy gauze, the generalized hope for a better life now assured by a vague but avuncular Providence.

Reinforcing this optimism was the transcendentalism popularized by the writings of Emerson and Thoreau. Again conveniently vague, making up with good feelings what it lacked in bothersome specifics, the attitude placed faith in intuition as the means to truth. It was an effervescent approach to nature--decades before Muir had called nature "the great book" full of "priceless knowledge" (September 13, 1865). In this yeasty view, to study a leaf or to revel in the grand prospect of snowy peaks was to catch glimpses of nothing less than the face of God. Thus, taking all this together, Muir gives solace to a recent widow that her beloved husband now is in ". . . a better world . . ." (ca. May 26, 1914). Muir writes the Hooker family, rejoicing that they have found refuge in the ". . . healing, soothing mountains" (June 13, 1911). In fact, nature could be so efficacious that he urges Helen to leave home for a while and ". . . camp out under the pines . . ." as a cure for her baby's teething (June 15, 1911). And even when the Hetch-Hetchy battle is all but lost--and at the same time, the Kaiser's army is marching roughshod across Europe--Muir consoles former Century Magazine editor Robert Underwood Johnson that though things may look bleak now, ". . . we are making some slight progress heavenward . . ." and someday ". . . man to man the world o'er shall brothers be . . ." (September 17, 1914).

Not that John Muir was a fool. A realistic businessman when need be, he could cut a sharp deal with a publisher or honestly best his fellow orchardists in Martinez. During harvest time, a train stopped at the local station and in the twilight hours dropped off packing crates for the growers. On such days, Muir rose early, to be sure he'd be first at the platform and get his pick of the best boxes. However, despite the practicality, Muir also had the good fortune of a salving, overarching philosophy to get him through his nights.

Not that those nights were all dark. Muir was swamped with letters begging for photographs and autographs and assaulting him with their authors' poetic efforts, conferring honorary degrees on him, inviting him to speak at this confab and that. Mail from admirers to their wilderness hero often began with high praise, then quickly shifted into requests for advice about intimate personal problems explained in pages of painful detail. Or they reminisced about meeting Muir briefly on the trail decades before. None of that shillyshallying, whining, or lightly veiled ingratiation for John M. Pfautz, a robust fan writing from Lisbon, Iowa. Leaving his rival eulogists far behind, he opened directly

with "In my eyes you are Gods [sic] beloved Apostle . . ." (undated; ca. 1914). The naive and unrestrained adoration might have chafed a more sophisticated and less patient man but, taking it all with cheerful appreciation, Muir penned gracious responses. Then, too, on the positive side, if his writing was coming hard, nonetheless it was coming along. The sales of *My First Summer in the Sierra*, for example, proved so lucrative that publishers were vying for his next book, which of course delighted Muir (June 25, 1911).

Even Helen's illness, dire affliction that it was, had unforeseen benefits. Muir tended to be a cave bear when he wrote. While the Bay fog swirled around the big house in Martinez, he holed up in his study, for weeks on end fussing to turn his mass of irascible notes into polished prose. Helen's illness got Muir out, forcing him to travel south. There, he renewed old friendships and made new ones among the heady literati typified by Southwestern booster Charles F. Lummis.

Particularly important in this regard was the city of Pasadena, then a cultural center in Southern California, with Vroman's bookstore on 60 East Colorado Street serving as a lively gathering place.[6] Representing the cream of the intellectual set there was Muir friend Adam Clark Vroman himself, a bibliophile and pioneer photographer of Southwestern Indians.[7] Rather different and mildly eccentric was Muir's fellow conservationist-at-arms Theodore P. Lukens. A pioneer in successful reforestation but also an enthusiast for some ill-fated adventures--be they mastering the intricate evils of learning to drive a car[8] or trying to make twisting eucalyptus trees defy their nature and grow into a crop of future telephone poles[9]--Lukens nevertheless prospered, becoming the mayor of Pasadena and leading the charge against Hetch-Hetchy from the southern part of the state.

Not that Muir's joy was unadulterated. Helen developed typhoid and, though eventually she regained her strength, for a while she was dangerously ill in a Los Angeles hospital (April 2, 1909). Adding to the mountaineer's worries at the time was a sleazy game played by George Wharton James. The Pasadena editor of his own Radiant Life Press, no stranger to scandals, James had gotten his hands on old correspondence between Muir and Jeanne Carr, a friend from Muir's Wisconsin days. Now James, in a move hinting at blackmail, threatened to publish the personal letters without Muir's permission (July 16, 1908; August 14, 1908). Yet for the most part, Muir returned to lonely Martinez cheered by his visits to the Southland, his batteries charged for more writing and for further forays into his beloved Sierra.

All such circumstances aside, Helen remained a focus in Muir's final years, and in turn Muir became involved in a whole new cluster of people and subsequent events. Eventually, a changing but revealing relationship emerged with Helen and her life on the desert. It bears repeating that Muir likely would have had it otherwise, would have had his two daughters at Martinez, ideally unmarried and remaining innocently girlish (May 25, 1908), to create a lighthearted and homey environment surrounding the study where he wrote.[10] Reality would have it otherwise, and Muir nonetheless adjusted to these unwanted changes.

For instance, a man of pines and glaciers, Muir had little innate love for deserts (August 18, 1914). His stentorian "American Forests" article hailed all types of landscapes as worthy of love, though his inclusion of arid lands seems more an ecumenical gesture than a plea from his heart.[11] True, he had taken some interest in studying the Petrified Forest while staying there off and on with Helen during 1905 and 1906, and he used his influence with President Roosevelt to urge on passage of the Antiquities Act protecting such treasures against rampant vandalism. Yet Muir would have rather been elsewhere, and his desert treks about the isolated railroad station at Adamana were but consequences of his concern for Helen's health. No doubt he at first thought Helen's stay on the Mojave would be temporary, though in fact she loved the desert and eventually made it her home, and this would have surprising repercussions on Muir's final years.

(to be continued)

Notes

[1]Muir letters cited are in *The Microform Edition of the John Muir Papers, 1858-1957.* Ed Ronald H. Limbaugh and Kirsten E. Lewis, Stockton, University of the Pacific, 1986), reels 16-22.

[2]For vignettes of the Muirs at the ranch, see Dix Van Dyke, *The Barstow Printer Review*, September 17, 1953; 8 October, 1953; 29 October, 1953, and November 19, 1953. All excerpts from Dix Van Dyke are from his memoirs, printed in this local newspaper on intermittent Thursdays throughout 1953 and bearing various titles, such as "The Pioneer Story" and "Pioneer Days."

[3]Peter Wild, "Months of Sorrow and Renewal: John Muir in Arizona, 1905-1906," *Journal of the Southwest* 29 (Spring 1987): 65-80.

[4]Holway R. Jones, *John Muir and the Sierra Club: The Battle for Yosemite* (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1965), pp. 82-169.

[5]Most of the time, Martinez is quite pleasant and warm. However, Muir's letters frequently emphasize the chill and damp, a further reflection of skewed perceptions due to his lowered spirits and his own nagging health problems.

[6]First settled in 1873-1874 by a band of colonists from Indiana, Pasadena has a unique history. As early as 1875 Pasadena boasted a lively literary society, forerunner of the town's ambitious cultural life. Henry Markham Page, *Pasadena: Its Early Years* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1964), pp. 39-40.

[7]William Webb and Robert A. Weinstein, *Dwellers at the Source: Southwestern Indian Photographs of A. C. Vroman, 1895-1904* (New York: Grossman, 1973).

[8]Shirley Sargent, *Theodore Parker Lukens: Father of Forestry* (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1969), p. 82.

[9]Ibid., pp. 74-76.

[10]John Muir and Wanda Muir, *Dear Papa: Letters between John Muir and his Daughter Wanda* (Ed. Jean Hanna Clark and Shirley Sargent. Yosemite, Panorama West Books, 1985), pp. viii-ix, 69.

[11]John Muir, "The American Forests," *Atlantic Monthly* 80. (145) 478 (August 1897): 145.

MUIR ARTICLE OF INTEREST

"John Muir and the Bidwells: The Forgotten Friendship," by Michael J. Gillis, recently appeared in the *Dogtown Territorial Quarterly* 21 (Spring 1995): 4-5, 18-23+. A lecturer in history at California State University, Chico, Gillis explores the intricacies of this long relationship, based on a study of letters, newspapers, and published sources.

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To the casual observer Orange County perhaps does have the appearance of a large suburb, or "edge city" adjacent to the larger Los Angeles County metropolitan basin. But, looks are deceiving. Upon closer inspection M. Gottdiener and George Kephart show that Orange County has a well developed economy which supplies a number of jobs roughly equal to the size of its own workforce, suggesting a relatively self-contained local economy. But the spatial 'deconcentration' of its economic infrastructure, which results in few identifiable traditional urban centers, makes this infrastructure less visible. This economic base differs from neighboring Los Angeles and other urban centers which developed earlier in containing less manufacturing, larger numbers of high technology and service firms, and higher levels of involvement in global trade.

Data presented by Rob Kling and Clark Turner show that such an economy necessarily contains a workforce composed of relatively higher proportions of 'information workers' than is usual elsewhere. Information work does not exist as a separate industrial or commercial sector, however, but appears spread throughout the more traditionally defined sectors of the economy, such as manufacturing, transportation and communication, finance, insurance and real estate, and governmental, health and educational services. Moreover, 'information capitalism' reshapes the way work is approached in established industries.

As one might guess, incomes are higher on average in Orange County than elsewhere in the Los Angeles basin, partly due to the higher salaries commanded by many though not all information workers; and, as Alladi Venkatesh argues, consumerism becomes a core element of the Orange County lifestyle to which even the less well healed aspire.

Mark Poster presents data which suggest that the high incidence of working mothers and dual income households results in patterns of child rearing distinctly different from earlier middle class family norms. Working parents are cosmopolitan, involving themselves in the wider community through work and consumption, and this is reflected in emerging approaches to parenting which are more likely to use child care services, pre-schools and other agencies outside the household. An unintended consequence is a reduction in the direct socializing influences of parents and greater influence of community institutions and the mass media.

Taken individually, none of these themes seem really new. However, following the early twentieth century German sociologist Max Weber, when assembled together the contributions to this anthology suggest a kind of ideal construct of the early twenty-first century urban settlement -- a shape or form to which no current urban area conforms perfectly, but one toward which many are moving. The editors believe their studies provide a "window on the future;" Orange County is an "anticipatory region" helping us see the forms development will increasingly take in other urban areas. The book is definitely a valuable addition to the literature on urbanization and urbanism, and brings a coherent interpretation to contemporary trends which may otherwise seem a fragmented and confusing puzzle.

This paperback edition of a highly regarded collection of studies originally published hardbound in 1991 contains an updated preface prepared by the editors, all members of the faculty of the University of California Irvine located in Orange County.

Rob Kling is a professor of computer science, and Spencer Olin and Mark Poster are on the history faculty. Although computer science and history might seem strange bedfellows, their contributions fit well together in this volume; other contributors to this multidisciplinary study, are drawn from computer science, history, management and sociology.

PRESS RELEASE DESCRIBES NEW MUIR BIOGRAPHY

***The Heart of John Muir's World: Wisconsin, Family, and Wilderness Discovery*, by Millie Stanley. (Madison, WI: Prairie Oak Press). 320 pages, 18 illus. $16.95 (paperback)**

In this new, original, and refreshing work, Millie Stanley shows John Muir in a context in which he has rarely been seen or appreciated--that of loyal and devoted friend and family member. The outlook, the activities, the very ethic of Muir, wanderer in the wilderness, pioneer ecologist, explorer, writer, discoverer,scientist, environmental lobbyist, father of the national park system--are shown to have been formed by close human relationships throughout his long and productive career.

For this work, Stanley utilized hundreds of Muir family letters housed at the University of the Pacific, in Stockton, California. This correspondence sheds new light on Muir's nature and that of his parents, Anne and Daniel Muir, and his siblings. Muir's correspondence with his family continued for his entire life and now provides deepening insight into his life and work.

Stanley's narrative expands greatly on the early Wisconsin influences that helped shape Muir's character. It describes his youthful years on Fountain Lake and Hickory Hill farms and shows that his early experiences set the tone for his later accomplishments on the national scene. It was in Marquette County,Wisconsin, in 1864, that Muir attempted to preserve a bit of Fountain Lake land for its beauty alone. That was the seed that grew into his major contribution to the formation of the national park system.

Millie Stanley has lived and worked for more than twenty years in Muir Country, in Marquette County, Wisconsin. Her work,incorporating a prodigious amount of research, utilizes many original documents and new resources published here for the first time.

JOHN MUIR AND HISTORY DAY

Recently the John Muir Center was pleasantly surprised by a letter from two industrious students, Nathaniel Bittner and Jeff Horn of Santa Lucia Middle School in Cambria, California. They have a History Day project due in January, and, they told us, "decided to get an early start gathering information." The History Day theme for the next school year is "The Individual or a Group: Taking a Stand, Making a Change in History." As Nathaniel and Jeff well know, Muir is an ideal candidate for this timely topic. They have collected data from the Internet and are working on a bibliography. They write that they "agree that John Muir was the man who started the conservation movement," but they "are confused by all the other groups that started after the Sierra Club in 1892." They seek recommendations for books and other materials. "We are of course looking for primary sources," they write, "but we know there is so much there, [so] how do we find the most important pieces to read?"

We have sent them a list of readings from the advance copy of the John Muir Day *Guide* prepared by Harold Wood of Visalia and a committee of Sierra Club and Department of Education Colleagues. This 32-page booklet will be released shortly. In the meantime, we'd be pleased to print letters, comments or suggestions for Nathaniel and Jeff, or for any other student contemplating a History Day project, in the next issue of the *John Muir Newsletter*. Send your thoughts directly to the *Newsletter* editor, Dr. Sally M. Miller, at the History Dept., UOP, Stockton, 95211.

JOHN MUIR PAPERBACK STILL AVAILABLE

A few copies of the paperback edition of *John Muir: Life and Work* are still available from the John Muir Center at a discounted price of $14.35 each, plus tax, postage and handling. To order copies, please clip the form below and send it with your check to the John Muir Center. Or you may purchase the book at the Center and save the postage and handling charges.

I/We wish to order _____ volume(s) of the paperback edition of *John Muir: Life and Work* at $14.35 per copy plus $1.11 tax (California residents only) and $2.00 for postage and handling for one copy. Add $1.00 handling for each each additional copy.

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_____

THE WILD MUIR AVAILABLE

Lee Stetson has collected 22 of Muir's greatest adventures, prepared introductions to place each episode in context, and organized them chronologically for a full range of readings. The result is offered in *The Wild Muir*, a 211-page paperback, available at $9.95 each, plus tax, shipping and handling, from Wild Productions, Box 811, Yosemite, CA 95389.

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